

VZCZCXRO6130  
RR RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHNJ #0117/01 0871231  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 271231Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6111  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000117

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C AND AF/SPG  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: HAVING DEFENDED DEBY, JEM/CL MOVES TO SOLIDIFY NEW UMBRELLA  
MOVEMENT

REF: STATE 0030003

¶1. (SBU) Summary. JEM/Collective Leadership fought on behalf of President Deby's government during the February rebel offensive in order to prevent Sudan from using Deby's collapse to "finish off" the Darfur conflict, JEM/CL Chairman Bahar Idriss Abu Gharda told Poloffs on March 25. Abu Gharda claimed that defections within the Chadian opposition have since strengthened Deby's hand. The URF will announce a new leadership structure within one week that will install Abu Gharda as president and Adam Bakheit as chief military commander and is open to exploring unification with SLA/Unity, which stalled because of the latter movement's internal fissures. Anticipating that elections in Darfur are unlikely before a political settlement is reached with the Sudanese Government, the URF plans to coordinate its "elections strategy" with the SPLM. End summary.

-----  
Support for Deby in JEM/CL's Interest  
-----

¶2. (SBU) Admitting that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)/Collective Leadership rushed to N'djamena in early February to defend the Chadian Government, JEM/CL Chairman Bahar Idriss Abu Gharda claimed in a March 25 meeting with Poloffs that the movement does not receive direct support from President Idriss Deby. However, the Sudanese Government is seeking regime change in Chad in order to "finish off" the Darfur issue, making it in JEM/CL's interest to bolster the Chadian government. "We didn't do this because of Deby," said Abu Gharda. "We did it for ourselves."

¶3. (SBU) The Chadian opposition lost 70 of their 280 vehicles during the offensive, said Abu Gharda, and Sudan since compensated for these losses. Despite Khartoum's support, the primary obstacle to a renewed Chadian rebel offensive is political not logistical, according to Abu Gharda. A considerable portion of Timan Erdimi's Rally of Forces for Change (RFC) has defected to Deby, as have Ouddai elements of Mahamat Nouri's Union des Forces de la Democratie et du Developpment (UFDD). Abu Gharda intimated that Deby inspired the defections through pay-offs, which have strengthened his hold on power.

-----  
URF Announcement Imminent  
-----

¶4. (SBU) After two months of consultations with field commanders, the United Revolutionary Front (URF) is prepared to announce a new, consolidated leadership structure within one week, said Abu Gharda. Abu Gharda will be the URF President, supported by four deputy presidents: Ibrahim Zubeidi for military affairs, Khamis Abdullah for financial affairs, Sharif Adam Nasour for political affairs, and Adam Ali Shoggar without portfolio. Adam Bakheit will serve as chief military commander, with three deputies: Gibril Abdelkarim, Abdallah Banda, and Yassin Yusuf. The announcement will be made

from Juba at the behest of the Sudan People's Liberation movement (SPLM), which hosted the discussions that brought JEM/CL together with elements of SLA/Khamis Abdullah, the National Movement of Reform and Development (NMRD), and the United Revolutionary Forces Front (URFF). After the announcement, senior URF figures will travel to Europe and, they hope, the U.S. Abu Gharda said they planned to submit a written request to meet with S/E Williamson.

-----  
Union with SLA/Unity?  
-----

15. (SBU) Due to a leadership struggle within SLA/Unity, the URF's unification discussions with that movement stalled. Abu Gharda indicated, however, that Suleiman Jamous and Sharif Harir have now accepted their rival, Abdullah Yehia, as the leader of SLA/Unity, taking the posts of humanitarian coordinator and secretary for foreign affairs, respectively, for themselves. Optimistic on an ultimate merger with SLA/Unity, Abu Gharda said that the URF plans to hold a conference after the upcoming announcement to "dispense" with the names of the individual factions that comprise the URF. At that point, unification discussions with SLA/Unity could recommence.

(Note: In a meeting to be reported septel, Jamous confirmed Abu Gharda's account of a reconciliation within SLA/Unity, but, rather than focusing on outreach to the URF, noted SLA/Unity's attempts to gain support among SLA/Abdulwahid supporters. End note.)

-----  
Non-committal on Census, Elections  
-----

16. (SBU) Though pledging that the URF will announce its position on census and elections at the same time that it announces its new leadership structure, Abu Gharda admitted that it will be difficult

NDJAMENA 00000117 002 OF 002

to obtain the "rights" that Darfurians deserve without altering the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and that Darfur is unlikely to participate in elections until a political solution is reached between the Sudanese Government and the rebel movements. "The problem of the CPA is there," said Abu Gharda. Darfurians comprise 20 percent of Sudan's population, he claimed, and deserved a commensurate share of positions in the national government. Poloff explained that the elections are a vehicle for Darfur to secure a larger voice in national political life and urged the URF to take action to mitigate tension and violence leading up to the census (reftel).

17. (SBU) In response, Abu Gharda said that the URF will coordinate its elections strategy with the SPLM. Believing that the SPLM's opposition to compensation for Darfurians and for a Darfurian vice president have changed, Abu Gharda stated that the SPLM's engagement on Darfur "is getting better"-particularly after the return of SPLM Deputy Secretaries General Yassir Arman and Abdelaziz Hilou to Sudan. His goal is to forge a common position with the SPLM on an elections strategy, including on whether elections should go forward.

NIGRO